

**COLORADO CANYONS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA**  
**Mack Ridge Working Group Meeting Minutes**  
**September 16, 2002**

Attendees:

Ken Currey	Gene Arnesen	Dawn Folks	Neal McKinstry
John Foster	Sue Benjamin	Kevin Foote	Tom Nix
Greg Gnesios	Nadja Brozina	Pat Kennedy	Clark Rieves
Bob Silbernagel	Karen Enenkel	Mel Lloyd	Jane Ross
Bob Anthony			Lovell Sasser

**Greetings and Introductions**

Kevin Foote called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**Working Group Discussions**

Kevin expressed concerns with a letter previously written by Lovell Sasser and read by Bob Silbernagel at an earlier Advisory Council meeting. Kevin felt this action had bypassed and undermined the Working Group's efforts. Each user group felt the others' intentions were antagonistic, and horseback riders asked the mountain bikers to provide evidence of trail damage caused by horses.

Ken Currey voiced his desire in seeing all user groups share the area's trails, rather than exclude one another from them. Ken went on to say that, while the equestrian users have a large amount of Wilderness available for recreation, motorized vehicles have less and less—and this results in shutting out the aged and disabled from enjoying the area. Ken feels that education, signage, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) enforcement are the answers, rather than excluding some user groups.

Kevin reiterated that he had envisioned the entire area as a "quiet area," prohibiting motorized travel. Dawn Folks stressed that horseback riders have historically used the Mack Ridge area.

Jane Ross, Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area (CCNCA) Planning Team Leader, returned to Kevin's issue with the Sasser letter and informed the group that the letter was considered to be part of the public scoping process. Jane reminded everyone that the monthly Advisory Council meetings are open to the public and each individual attending tonight's meeting is invited to attend any of the meetings.

Several made comments about using the trails and rarely encountering others, then wondering why excluding other users from the trails is an issue. Jane again reminded the attendees that their focus should be on the future, not on the past. The key to a successful resource management plan (RMP) is the planning phase. Use of the area will be somewhat self-regulating, and no user group will get everything it wants. Compromise is necessary, or decisions made in a BLM office may override any user group's wishes. Jane made the observation that mountain bikers are passionate about the Mack Ridge area, while horseback riders have several preferred areas within the National Conservation Area (NCA). Jane asked the group to focus on maintaining quiet-use areas, as well as including all user groups in the plan. Jane went on to point out that the Kokopelli Trail system is not only known nationally, but perhaps internationally, and other user groups must learn to accept that Mack Ridge is primarily a mountain bikers' area.

Karen Enenkel agreed and stated that now is the group's opportunity to plan for the increased use the area will see; it cannot stay the way it is. Greg Gnesios, CCNCA Manager, emphasized that education will be key in managing the area, and it is incumbent upon the BLM to inform and guide users toward that end.

Ken shared his experiences with the North Fruita Desert Plan, and all user groups have come to terms with sharing the area with others through encouraging and discouraging certain activities in specific areas. Greg added that starting with less restrictions and effectively communicating to users is recommended. The group should consider limits of acceptable change and include those limits in the plan for future restrictions.

Jane asked whether mountain bikers could accept keeping two trails open to motorized vehicles, those being access to Crow Bottom and the Mack Ridge Overlook trails. Jane encouraged the group to compromise and step back from the proposal, asking what can work among the user groups. Jane feels it is not unreasonable for the mountain biking community to want a few trails that exclude horse traffic and asked if the horseback riders could compromise. Dawn stated that she would like to see language included in the plan that would allow for restrictions when issues begin to surface, but to not exclude horses now. It was agreed, that while horseback riders will continue to be allowed to use the area, their use would not be encouraged.

Jane led the discussion toward the group's near-term objectives, and expressed the need for the group to develop a vision for the area—a vision that will include mountain bikers.

Pat Kennedy requested that Greg clarify the language allowed in the RMP concerning limiting future use by various recreational-use groups. After Greg confirmed that the plan could provide for future regulation through specific language, Pat agreed to continue to allow horseback riders on the trail system. Greg encouraged all of the attendees to put their personal agendas aside, and to reach consensus by thinking in general terms about the average-skilled individual within their own user groups. By effectively communicating through kiosks, books, and guides, and by developing the

east and west portals to the NCA, users will be encouraged to choose the appropriate trails.

Jane covered the four different levels of alternatives being looked at, and those alternative themes are recreation-intensive, conservation-intensive, multiple-use intensive, and adaptive management through benefits-based management (BBM). Jane reminded the group that the RMP's goal is to protect existing resources, but at the same time, allow the public to enjoy recreational opportunities within the CCNCA. It was pointed out that it might appear that several new trails are being created, yet in an attempt to develop smart trails, some trails will be closed and rehabilitated. No users will be excluded until those new trails are completed.

Kevin offered that narrow, single-track trails are quality mountain bike trails and summarized group decisions previously agreed upon. The group had previously rated trails and agreed that no specific user group would be excluded. The mountain bikers had compromised and agreed to allow other users access to the top of Mack Ridge. The proposed "F" and "D" trails were designated for multiple-use, but now should be set-aside for hikers and runners (see attached map). The proposed "A" trail would connect two dead-end trails. The Kokopelli Trail is a multiple-use trail, and while the Lion's and Mary's Loops will accommodate horse traffic, the Moore Fun and Mack Ridge Trails are surfaced with bentonite and will not stand up to horses' hooves.

The group is rethinking its priority list created in the August meeting and will allow, but not encourage, horseback riders to use the trails. Therefore, additional parking for horse trailers should not be provided.

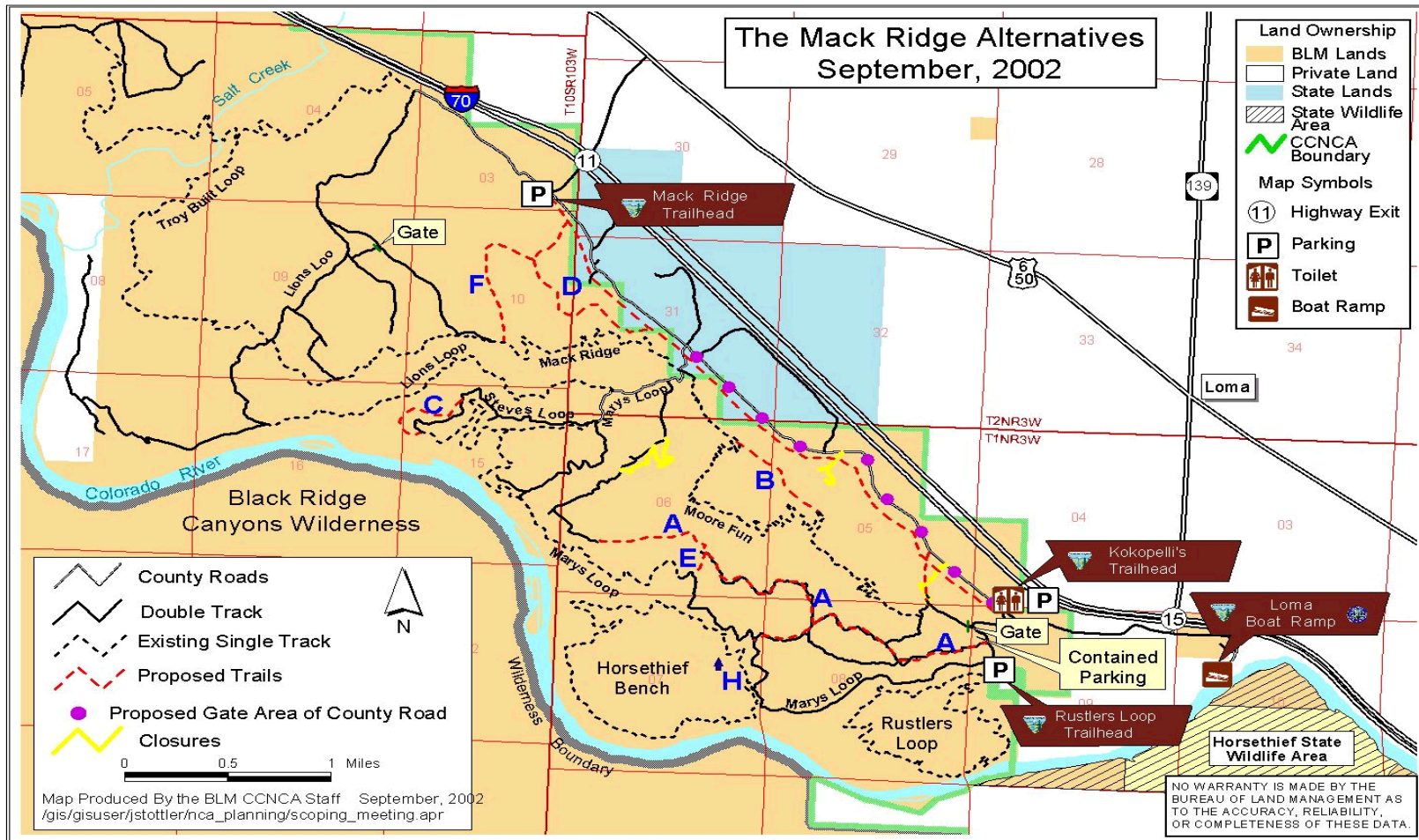
Jane stressed that Mack Ridge's vision must include mountain bikers in the RMP since the trend is, and will continue to be, toward increased use by mountain bikers. Kevin agreed with Jane that, if horseback riders are excluded from the Moore Fun Trail, they could be allowed access to both the Lion's and Mary's Loops, until obvious safety issues arise. Jane again urged the group to look to the future, not the past. Bob Silbernagel reiterated that BLM could take action if deemed necessary, so compromise is encouraged.

Kevin proposed that both the "A" and "E" trails be completed, with the eastern end of "A" possibly closed and rehabilitated, using Mary's Loop as the primary trail access. Horseback riders could be encouraged to use these new trails through signage. Kevin went on to propose that the front-side of the Mack Ridge Trail be designated for mountain bikers only, and the proposed "F" trail allow for multiple-use. It was agreed that other trails within the area would be self-regulating through both the type and amount of use received.

The group reached agreement in that the Lion's and Mary's Loops will allow horseback riders, but be excluded from the Moore Fun and Mack Ridge Trails in order to preserve the trails' surface integrity. Also agreed upon, the proposed "B" trail shortcutting Moore Fun is not a practical trail and will be deleted from the plan.

Jane announced that a facilitator would join the group in a meeting tentatively set for 5:00 p.m., at the BLM office, on October 28, 2002, with the purpose of establishing group goals and objectives, as well as a mission statement for the Mack Ridge area. The next Working Group meeting is scheduled for October 7, 5:00 p.m., at the BLM office. Prior to the meeting adjourning at 7:10 p.m., Greg stated that he appreciated the group's efforts in reaching compromise tonight.

## Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area Mack Ridge Alternatives



Note to Map User: No warranty is made by the BLM as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregation with other data.